

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

The claims have been amended to read specifically on the embodiment of FIG. 4 and 5a and FIGS. 24-26. When a claim is allowed, the disclosure will be modified to drop FIGS. 5b-d, 21 - 23 and the related parts of the Specification.

A common problem with the lock-washer assemblies is that they damage the bolt or stud shaft they are mounted on, as they are normally used in high-torque situations. The damage is typically a cutting or scoring of the bolt shaft, which typically is made of a softer metal than the lock washers. This scoring or cutting takes place at the corners of the inner peripheries, that is where the planar end faces join the cylindrical inner surface of the central bore.

The invention avoids this problem by providing the rounding shown in FIG. 5a at this location. This ensures that even if the lock washer is made of hard spring steel and the bolt is made of standard mild steel, there will be no sharp line contact that could cut the bolt.

Nothing like this is seen in US 5,409,338 of MacKinlay. There is instead an inner sleeve set in square-section grooves. Such a sleeve has shown to be ineffective in practice, which is why claims to it have been dropped here, because in fact the sleeve itself can do the damage done by a sharp-cornered lock washer. The claims now in the case talk of a "rounding" that is nowhere shown or suggested by MacKinlay, and all claims to an internal sleeve are dropped, so this reference is irrelevant to the amended claims.

The §103 rejection is avoided by the amended claims, and the claims are in condition for allowance.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

KF Ross PC

/Andrew Wilford/

by: Andrew Wilford, 26,597
Attorney for Applicant

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5683 Riverdale Avenue Box 900
Bronx, NY 10471-0900
Cust. No.: 535
Tel: 912 344-4467.
Fax: 718 601-1099
Email: email@kfrpc.com

Enclosure: Extension (three months)